

Foundation:

Mt. 2:23, "He shall be called a Nazorean."

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, Joseph, and Mary:

Please help me! I come to stay with you in Nazareth. Thank you for allowing me to stay in your home.

Mary, since you were chosen by the Heavenly Father to be the Mother of His Son, you have a desire to love and help those your Son came to save. I ask you to please take me into your home, your heart, and your love.

Joseph, you too were chosen, and you lived so faithfully in the call you had been given. Please assist me. Amen.

Day 1:

Luke 1:26-30, In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

Mary, we may not understand completely the role grace played in your life, but this special favor granted you by God always

led you in the direction of God and neighbor. (We recognize that our choices at times have been selfish, but we pray that none have ever been an intentional rejection of God. The Holy Scriptures make clear who we are to the Heavenly Father, (1 Jn. 3:2, "...we are God's children now..." and what He desires of us, Jn. 14:15, "...keep my commandments," and Mt. 22:37 and 39, "... "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind...You shall love your neighbor as yourself..." We ask for the grace to respond to God as you did. The example of your life points us to placing ourselves at God's disposal. "Do whatever He tells you." John 5:19. Mary we ask your help to make choices that are faithful.

Points to Ponder:

- Joseph and Mary clearly had inclined lives toward God. What about us?
- Mary and Joseph lived their lives in obedience to what God wanted from them. What about us? It was about being faithful.
- Are we placing our life in the hands of God?
- Nazareth is living in faith where we are – the here in life
- Is our life pointing to obedience?

Day 2:

Luke 1:31, Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.

Mary, God had a plan for you. It is magnificent in its reality and so simple in its unfolding. This plan of God's will require everything from you. There is an element of uncertainty, there

are others involved who will be affected by this plan of God's, but the implications are eternal. God in announcing through Gabriel the name of Jesus is beginning both to help you recognize that your life is linked to God and obedience will be called for. The path of obedience will become your way. The circumstances will unfold in your life, but God's plan requires your obedience not management. It will require of you an attentiveness and a pondering.

Points to Ponder:

- God's plan involves an unfolding in God's time (See quote from Office of the Readings development of God's teaching) *
- Our lives are linked to God's
- Obedience not management
- pondering
- Obedience through enlightenment

*From the first instruction by Saint Vincent of Lerins:

“Is there to be no development of religion in the Church of Christ? Certainly, there is to be development and on the largest scale. Who can be so grudging to men, so full of hate for God, as to try to prevent it? But it must truly be development of the faith, not alteration of the faith. Development means that each thing expands to be itself, while alteration means that a thing is changed from one thing into another. The understanding, knowledge and wisdom of one and all, of individuals as well as of the whole Church, ought then to make great and vigorous progress with the passing of the ages and the centuries, but only along its own line of development, that is, with the same doctrine, the same meaning and the same import. The religion of souls should follow the law of development of bodies. Though

bodies develop and unfold their component parts with the passing of the years, they always remain what they were.”

Day 3:

Luke 1:34, But Mary said to the angel

Mary, your life has met a significant moment. It has brought you to talk with angels. The distance between earth and heaven and the presence of God is always near but the distance now seems closer. You have entered the door, a decisive moment. We are aware that God’s plan in your life will not only affect you and those close to you but the lives of us all. This moment reminds us how important our lives are and what our God desires of us. “We’re all in this together.” Your humble way of life at Nazareth is to be our way.

Points to Ponder:

- Joseph and Mary clearly had inclined lives toward God. What about us?
- Joseph and Mary lived their lives in humble obedience to what God wanted from them. What about us? (It is about being faithful, placing our lives in the hands and God’s plan)
- Nazareth is living with faith where we are – the here in life.

Day 4:

Luke 1:38, Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Mary, what beautiful things happened in your life when even at a young age you were dedicated to God by your parents. This

sense of faith was so a part of you. Please pray that we might have this gift. There have been moments that aided us in the direction of the life that your Son would eventually call us to, but we did not recognize this at the time. Since you have allowed us to visit and stay in your home in Nazareth, we are blessed to experience God's grace present in your home. The very air you breathed was a taking in of God's Spirit. Help us to have a heart like yours. (We recognize during the day that our hearts drift from God). Mary, help us to give of ourselves freely and totally. Help us to embrace the eternal and to leave behind the fleeting.

Points to Ponder:

- You were always disposed to God
- A sense of faith was so a part of Nazareth
- At Nazareth peace dwelt
- Our hearts at time drift away from God
- We have not always given of ourselves freely or totally
- We have pursued the fleeting and not the eternal.

Day 5:

Luke 1:39 & 40, During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

Mary, the news that you received from Gabriel leads you to visit Elizabeth. The "Good News" must be responded to and shared. There is an urgency, no matter the inconvenience or difficulties.

Points to Ponder:

- “Good News” must be responded to and shared.
- urgency, no matter the inconvenience or difficulties

Day 6:

Luke 1:45, Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

Mary, you are a woman of faith. It is no wonder both by providence and your choice that Joseph would be your spouse. You were both oriented in the direction of God. Please assist us to imitate your faith. 1) You gave your life to God 2) You placed your life at God’s disposal 3) Your family always remains faithful and close to our God 4) You acknowledged God in your hymn of praise 5) you point to obedience 6) You are below the Cross of your Son 7) You are our Heavenly Mother.

Points to Ponder:

- oriented in the direction of God
- gave life to God
- at God’s disposal
- faithful and close to our God
- acknowledged God
- Mary’s life points to and obedience
- Mary is our Heavenly Mother

Day 7:

Luke 1:46-47, Mary said: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior.

Mary, your life is touched by God. He is the source of your joy. (We have a long way to go on this one). “Name something that

you have that you have not received.” 1 Cor. 4:7. You express what is present in your life and the reality of God’s presence will deepen even more. This leads you to joy.

Points to Ponder:

- touched by God
- source of your joy

Day 8:

Luke 1:48, For he has looked upon his handmaid’s lowliness; and behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.

Mary, what are we, but servants of the Lord like you? Mary, you received a special gift of grace, but this helped you to be as we are called to be humble and not for a moment did you ever forget what the Lord had done in your life, you are the moon reflecting the sun.

Points to Ponder:

- we are called to be servants of the Lord
- you never forget what the Lord had done in your life

Day 9:

Luke 1:49, The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Mary, you know that you are a creature of a loving Creator. You are aware of the gifts He has given you.

Points to Ponder:

- a creature of a loving creator

- aware of the gifts given by God

Day 10:

Luke 1:50 His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him.

Mary, for all times you are linked to the past and to us in the present. Like Paul who says in, Philippians 3:8, “I...consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things.”

Points to Ponder:

- For all times
- everything as a loss
- Life defined how?
- “finding in God and not ourselves”
- Nazareth
- To see things as God sees them, Mary points the way. An entire new way in life. So much ahead of us if this becomes our way.
- What beautiful words “to join your life to God’s.”

Believe by Josh Groban

[Chorus]

Believe in what your heart is saying

Hear the melody that's playing

There's no time to waste

There's so much to celebrate

Believe in what you feel inside

And give your dreams the wings to fly

You have everything you need
If you just believe

Day 11:

Luke 1:51, He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.

Mary, your home in Nazareth teaches us that we are to discover the meaning of our lives in God. We have throughout our lives had hearts that have been so far from where they needed to be. Mary, please thank the Heavenly Father, for His Divine patience. We are to be like you, and Joseph, you were always about God's will. Please help us to embrace the spirit of Psalm 131:1 & 2, "LORD, my heart is not proud; nor are my eyes haughty. I do not busy myself with great matters, with things too sublime for me. Rather, I have stilled my soul, like a weaned child to its mother, weaned is my soul."

Points to Ponder:

- dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.
- the home of Nazareth always teaches
- "finding the meaning of our lives in God."
- be about the things that God has placed before us

Day12:

Luke 1:53, He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly.

Mary, please help us to realize the precious gift that we have been given. We know how far away our hearts and lives have

been from our Almighty Father wants us to be. We are His sons and daughters. Help us to be humble as you were.

Points to Ponder:

- lifted up the lowly
- our hearts have been far from God

Day 13:

Lk. 1: 54 & 55, He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to His descendants forever.”

Mary, your prayer speaks of the long years that have proceeded. The one consistent reality is God’s faithfulness. Certainly, this is help for us when we go through difficult times. This reminds me of the necessity for humility and trust in God. Help us to be faithful.

Points to Ponder:

- He has helped Israel
- remembering his mercy
- His descendants forever

Day 14:

Luke 1:56, Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Mary, you stayed with Elizabeth until John was born and then you returned home. Surely, your reason was to do your best to

assist Elizabeth. There was much that was pressing itself on your heart but your concern for your cousin was first. Help us to think of others as you did.

Points to Ponder:

- do your best to assist
- concern for others first
- think of others

Day 15:

Luke 2:6 & 7, While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Mary, here you were away from home, and you had to make use of what you brought with you or what was available. Again, your life calls out to us to walk in trust and union with our God. We are so sorry that our hearts have been so far from your Son for too long. Help us to remember that God provides.

Points to Ponder:

- wrapped him in swaddling clothes
- no room for them in the inn

Day 16:

Luke 2:16, [The shepherds] went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger.

Mary, you knew so well that in your life you always experienced God taking the first step. It is not your will, but

God's will that was first. We see God guiding humble shepherds, to welcome your Son. What wonders you witnessed!

Points to Ponder:

- shepherds found Mary and Joseph and the infant lying in the manger
- God always takes the first step
- the Lord is pointing and teaching us through humble shepherds.

Day 17:

Luke 2:19, And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.

Mary, this verse helps us to understand your relationship and commitment with God. You sought to unite all things to Him.

Points to Ponder:

- all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.
- totality
- sought to unite all things

Day 18:

Luke 2:21, When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb

Mary you and Joseph were always obedient to God. Please help and teach us to be the same.

Points to Ponder:

- the name given him by the angel

Day 19:

Luke 2:22-24, When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, 23just as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,” 24and to offer the sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,” in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.

Mary, we see your fidelity to God to act “in accordance with the dictate of the law.” Once again, we observe your inclination toward God, total obedience, and the desire to be faithful. We ask for your continued intercession for our lives in this regard.

Points to Ponder:

- according to the law of the Moses
- in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord

Day 20:

Luke 2:27 & 28, He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God....

Mary: “You will see much greater things than this.” (Jn. 1:50). I am sure Mary that this was true for your entire life. You

witnessed God's action in your life. We see this when you were informed about Elizabeth and how this knowledge from God led you to go in haste to visit Elizabeth. The knowledge was both a joy and love calling out to you.

Points to Ponder:

- he took him into his arms and blessed God....
- "You will see much greater things than this."
- love that called out to you

Day 21:

Luke 2:33-35, The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; 34and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted 35(and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Mary, Simeon's prophecy must have led you to ponder. The words spoken by Simeon would unfold over time, but they were never so true until you stood below the Cross of your Son.

Points to Ponder:

- were amazed
- and you yourself a sword will pierce

Day 22:

Luke 2:39 & 40, When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Mary, your life and that of Joseph and Jesus continued in quiet solitude and faithfulness, doing all those many things that compose family life, but faith was always first. Help us to God our priority in our homes. Help us to show this in our willingness to forgive one another. Help us also, to make God a part of our daily conversations with each other.

Points to Ponder:

- they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth
- is God in our conversation with each other

Day 23:

Luke 2:41-42, Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, ⁴²and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom.

Mary, so much was God's life a part of the life of your home in Nazareth. You always lived in union with God. It is because of this spirit in your home that the feast of the Passover must have been a cause of great joy.

Points to Ponder:

- Each year his parents went to Jerusalem
- went up according to festival custom

Day 24:

Luke 2:43-45, ⁴³After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Thinking that he was in the

caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, 45but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.

Mary, this must have been one of those pondering moments that occurred as you searched with concern for Jesus. He is growing up and as Paul says, Rom 13:11, For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed..." Perhaps, Mom's would delay the growing up of their children. Jesus as He aged came closer to what would be required of Him. We know also that a "sword" waited that would pierce your heart. But the plan of God is unfolding before you. It is at Jerusalem that you find Jesus and Jerusalem waited for Him to fulfill why He had come. This unfolding was also an unveiling of truth which was to be pondered in your heart.

Points to Ponder:

- his parents did not know it
- journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances
- not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem

Day 25:

Luke 2:46, After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, 47and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. 48When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." 49And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my

Father's house?" 50But they did not understand what he said to them.

Mary, please continue to assist us to ponder and to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us to understanding.

Points to Ponder:

- they found him in the temple
- they did not understand

Day 26:

Luke 2:51, He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. 52And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God and man

Mary: Like Son like Mother, how important "Holy Obedience" was in your home in Nazareth. Mary your days and moments together were lessons in grace. Grace was present before your eyes.

Points to Ponder:

- was obedient to them
- his mother kept all these things in her heart

Day 27:

Matthew 1:18 (Part #1), Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit.

Mary, your choice to be obedient to God had consequences in your relationship with Joseph, your family, and your community.

Joseph, you were chosen, and God's plan unfolded before you. Throughout Israel's history God revealed great acts of love and power. We know that you were a devout, righteous, innocent man. The news that Mary will give you will trouble your heart. You do not have the whole story, there is more to be revealed but to be faithful to God is where your heart is. Joseph, you teach us to be a people of faith, even when we may not understand. Mary and you were always "yes" to God.

Points to Ponder:

- before they lived together
- she was found with child through the Holy Spirit.
- "Good News" must be responded to and shared.
- urgency, no matter the inconvenience or difficulties
- always "yes" to God

Day 28:

Matthew 1:18 (Part #2), Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit.

Joseph, the Annunciation seemed beyond your understanding. This action of God perhaps was beyond human reason, but you are a man of faith. Where reason failed faith took over, you were totally trusting of God's will once it had been made known to

you through a dream. Joseph like Mary, you are guiding us to obedience to God. God's ways and thoughts are higher than our own.

Points to Ponder:

- Joseph and Mary clearly had inclined lives toward God. What about us?
- They lived their lives in humility living lives of obedience to what God wanted from them. What about us? (It is about being faithful where we are and placing your lives in the hands of God)
- Nazareth means faith where we are – the here in life
- pointing to obedience.

Day 29:

Matthew 1:18, (Part #3) Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit.

Joseph, throughout Israel's history God has done great things but your heart at this moment is in another place, you are a devout and righteous man. The news Mary will give you will trouble your heart. You do not have the whole story, there is more to be revealed, but you are always faithful to God.

Points to Ponder:

- God reveals His truth at times slowly and not at once.
- Our lives are linked to God
- Obedience not management
- We are called like Mary to ponder

Day 30:

Matthew 1:19, Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly.

Joseph, you sought always to be faithful to God. There is in you a likeness to our Heavenly Father, a likeness that had a concern for Mary. Thank you, Joseph that in spite of the confusion, sadness, and hurt that the circumstances must have had on your heart you had concern for Mary and recognized the greatness of God's love.

Points to Ponder:

- decisive moment
- humility, and the humble life.
- faithful to God, more important than lineage
- likeness to our Heavenly Father
- concern for Mary
- greater things than us.

Day 31:

Mt. 1:20-21: Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. 21She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Joseph, you point us in the direction of obedience. You help us realize that our Heavenly Father is so much greater than

ourselves. (Oh, how much we need the gift of being humble). You are pointed in the direction of truth. We give thanks with you for this great gift that you received. You are one of the first to receive these eternal truths, with most not knowing the important part you had in God's plan. What joy too you must have had in your heart. The long wait was over and God Himself was so close. What you must have felt is what we feel when we hold Jesus in our hands at Mass in the Eucharist.

Points to Ponder:

- at a young age you are disposed to God
- sense of faith was so a part of you
- tasted a sense of peace that was present among you and your Holy Family
- Joseph's faith steadies our hearts when we are tempted to drift from God
- give of ourselves freely and totally like Joseph and Mary
- we are tempted to pursue the fleeting and not the eternal.
- gift of being humble
- pointed in the direction of truth
- one of the first to receive these eternal truths
- long wait was over...God was so close

Day 32:

Matthew 1:24 & 25, When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. 25He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

Joseph, you teach us to be a person of faith, even when we may not understand. This was the response on the part of both you

and Mary. You understood the call to obey God. You both were always “yes” to God.

Points to Ponder:

- always “yes” to God

Day 33:

Matthew 2:11, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Joseph some things were hidden or came slower to be revealed but what a gift it must have been to have the Magi arrive. Your life was part of the unfolding of the providence and will of God, but everything continued to affirm what had been told you by the angel. We are glad for the revelations small and large that were revealed before you. It must have been like this every day in your home in Nazareth.

Points to Ponder:

- unfolding of the providence and will of God
- everyday brought a gift to the home of the Holy Family

Day 34:

Matthew 2:13-15, When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.”

Joseph, you do not complain when called, you simply obeyed.

Points to Ponder:

- he did not complain
- he was inclined toward obedience

Day 35:

Matthew 2:19-20, When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.”

Joseph, once again you are attentive to the direction of God, and you obey.

Points to Ponder:

- The example of what a life of faith looks like

Day 36:

Mt. 2:21 & 22, He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. 22But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee.

Joseph, our God was aware of your human fear and once again He does as He did throughout your entire life, He provided guidance within a dream.

Points to Ponder:

- God was aware of your human fear
- throughout your entire life, He provides

Day 37:

Mt. 2:23: He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazorean.”

Joseph, you help us to remember that we are to seek God and not ourselves, and when we do we discover our life. The circumstances brought you to Nazareth, where God was still the God of Abraham, the God Jacob, and the God of Isaac.

Points to Ponder:

- For all times
- everything as loss
- Life defined how?
- “finding life in God and not ourselves”
- Nazareth

Last Thought:

To see things as God sees them, Mary and Joseph and their home in Nazareth points the way to an entire new way of life. There is so much ahead of us if this becomes our way.

[Chorus]

Believe in what your heart is saying
Hear the melody that's playing
There's no time to waste
There's so much to celebrate
Believe in what you feel inside
And give your dreams the wings to fly

You have everything you need
If you just believe

What beautiful words “to join your life to God’s.” Joseph and Mary did so and their lives and their home in Nazareth always pointed to God.

Final Thoughts:

John 18:36, “My kingdom does not belong to this world.”

Mt. 6:33, “...seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness...”

Like Jesus we stand before the world represented by Pilate, Herod and those others who accused Him. In such moments we remind ourselves of what Jesus said, “the Father and I are one.”
John 10:30

Mt. 27:21, The governor said to them in reply, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” They answered, “Barabbas!”

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Choose the humility and simplicity of Nazareth